The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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The Church Spider.

Two spiders, so the story goes.
Upon a living bent,
Entered the meeting-house one day,
And hopefully were heard to say;
"Here we shall have at least fair play,
With nothing to prevent."

Each chose his place and went to work;
The light webs grew apace,
One on the altar spun his thread,
But shortly came the sexton dread
And swept him off, and so, half dead
He sought another place.

"I'll try the pulpit next," said he;
"There surely is a prize.
The desk appears so neat and clean,
I'm sure no spider there has been:
Besides how often have I seen,
The pastor brushing flies."

He tried the pulpit, but alas!
His hopes proved visionary;
With dusting brush the sexton came
And spoiled his geometic game,
Nor gave him time nor space to claim
The right of sanctuary.

At length, half starved, and weak and lean,
He sought his former neighbor,
Who now had grown so sleek and round,
He weighed a fraction of a pound,
And looked as if the art he'd found
Of living without labor.

"How is it, friend," he asked, "that I
Endure such thumps and knocks,
While you have grown so very gross?"
"Tis plain,' he answered, 'not a loss
I've met since first I spun across
The contribution box."

"Largely thou givest, precious Lord!
"Largely thy gifts should be restored;
Freely thou givest, and thy word
Is 'freely given.'
He, only, who forgets to hoard,
Has learned to live."

For the Myrtle.

The Woodchuck.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

WOULD you like to have me tell you a story about a little animal that lived in a hole in the ground, not far away from where I spent the summer a few summers ago.

He was not born in that little house in the ground, where we first found him.

The house that his mother built was some distance away.

But her house was away up in the woods where there were no people living, and this little woodchuck, of which I am writing, used when he was a baby to come to the door of his mother's house, and say:

"Oh dear, what a lonely place this is. If ever I get to be a grown woodchuck, I will go away from here."

"Why, surely," the mother woodchuck would say: "There is plenty of society here. We have woodchuck houses all about us, and there are squirrels and rabbits in every direction; and the trees are full of birds. I don't see how you can call this place lonely."

"I want to see men," says the little woodchuck.

"What do you want to see them for? I don't, for my part, think that men are so very handsome to look at; and they are a great deal more dangerous than the neighbors we have."

"Oh," said the little woodchuck. "They are

handsome. I saw two beautiful little girls picking berries in the woods yesterday. I watched them a long time, and thought how I should like to live near them. And then this morning there was a man went by our door with a long stick on his shoulder, that looked beautifully."

"Was the stick bigger at one end than at the other?" the mother asked.

"Yes, it had a big clump on the end that was over his back."

"Yes, my child, I understand that kind of a stick. I have seen men carry them a great many times.

They go off with a great noise, and there is a flash, and the birds and squirrels drop down dead out of the trees. I wouldn't advise you to come out of the house, when you see a man with that kind of a stick about."

"Why, it looked very innocent mother, and I thought I should like to jump up on the end of it, and have a ride."

"I guess you wouldn't ride far on that kind of a carriage, for the man would throw you down and beat your brains out with it."

"I don't think this man would have beaten my brains out, he looked so kind."

"You can't trust men that carry those kind of sticks. Now you remember what I say. If you don't remember it, your days will not be long on the earth."

The mother woodchuck went away on her daily rounds, after this talk with her little one; and the young woodchuck sat at the door of the house, and thought on what his mother had said.

I am getting large enough to try life for myself, he thought. I'll go right away now while mother is gone. Down toward the palaces where those pretty little girls live, I will go. I saw which way they went, and if I can find their house I'll build mine somewhere not far away from it, and then I can see them come and go, every day.

The little woodchuck kept to his resolution. He took the wood's path, that he had seen the little girls go down, and kept running on and on, until at last he came out on a hill-side where there were no more trees, and there was a farm-house in sight.

Just as the wood-chuck stood there looking at this house, one of the little girls that he had seen up in the woods came out of it, and began playing with a kitten near the door.

Presently the other little girl joined her, coming out of the same house.

This is the place for me to live, said the little woodchuck. I will build my house on this hill-side, and then I can see the pretty children every day."

This was a very easy thing for him to think, but the real act of building was another and very different thing.

You see wood-chucks are not so very unlike children in this respect. It is the easiest thing in the world for a little child to say:

"I will build a house," or, "I will sail a ship", or, "I will go alone into a city and find my way easily enough. "Or, I will ride two horses at once, as I have seen the men in the circus do."

A child can *say* all these things, but when they come to try to do them, they often find that words are easier than deeds.

This was the case with the little woodchuck. He had left home too young to have learned many of the things that he needed to know, before he was fit to take up life for himself,

He had never asked his mother how she had set to work when she first began to build her house.

But this he knew, the house was under the ground. A hole must be dug, and the woodchuck tried his little paws to begin digging.

But he was not strong enough yet, to dig as he had seen his mother do.

The summer had been very dry, and the hill was very hard. At least the outside of it was; for it had baked in the hot sun until it was a very hard crust.

If the woodchuck had not gone so far from home, he could have asked his mother about it, and she would have told him that the earth was not as hard all the way in. That, if he would persevere through the first crust, he would find it easier digging afterward.

But he had no mother to ask, and so he scratched away nearly all one day, and he had made very little progress toward his building.

Toward night he grew very much discouraged.

Sitting down on the hill-side, he said to himself:

"I don't know what I am to do. I can't live without a house that is clear. And it seems equally clear that I can't build one."

As he sat there feeling this great discouragement, he looked down into the valley, and there was a man at work in a garden.

He had a spade and was turning the earth.

The woodchuck looked at him with delight.

"There, thought he. That is just what I want to finish my house with. If I had such a tool as that man is working with, I could go on with my building without any trouble.

"I will go right down," he said to himself," and ask the man if he will lend it to me for a little while."

Then he thought: "He wouldn't be very likely to lend it, when he is using it himself.

But perhaps he would let me take it to-night after he is done with it. I have heard that men don't work in the night. With us woodchucks, it don't make any difference. We can work just as well after dark, as before.

So I will ask him to loan me the tool to-night, while he is asleep, and I will return it to him in the morning, when he is ready to go to work.

This seemed a very good plan to the woodchuck, and he hurried away down the hill to carry it out.

When he arrived in the garden, he was a little frightened, for the man looked a great deal larger now that he was close to him, than he had done from the distance at which he had first seen him.

But he was resolved not to be a coward, so he walked up boldly to the man and said:

"Please sir, will you listen to me for a moment."

"And who are you?" said the man turning round quickly.

"I am a little woodchuck that has come to live near you, and—

The man didn't wait for the sentence to be finished, but springing forward, and making a pass at the little annimal with the spade, he said:

"Oh yes. I understand who you are. I want no such neghbors on my premises. I'll soon make a finish of you. You are the one that has been catching my chickens lately are you?"

The woodchuck was terribly frightened, and ran as fast as ever his legs could carry him, with the man close behind him.

The man ran the faster, and would certainly have overtaken and killed him, had there not been, fortunately, a large pile of wood near by, into which he ran, and lay there trembling all the day. *E. M. B.*

PALESTINE is one-fourth the size of New York.

Be of Help—Who WillTry it?

Children we are in the midst of the winter weather, and there are many things to be done.

With the farmer, the wood must be prepared, the cattle properly cared for, the cows milked, the horses looked after, the pigs fed, "old Dobbin harnessed to the sleigh," and a thousand and one other things attended to. Now in the happy family, all assist. There are no shirks. Will you not try and see how much you can do, each one of you, of what there is to be done? Be up in season in the morning, "and at it." Don't grumble at a little cold. Don't wait to be told a dozen times before you move. Do every thing well, and always have the last thing finished up in season for school. Never get a "tardy mark," nor a whipping from father or mother. There is no need of it, if you do the best you can. Let us see now, who will go through with the winter in this way. On the first day of March next, let those who can do so, write us, and we will publish their letters and their names in the BANNER as a memorial of their worthiness. At the bottom of the letter, father or mother or guardian, should say, "The above is correct," and sign the same.—*Editor of the Bauner.*

Our New Dress.

"Jesus has a dress for all his little ones," said Jennie's mamma, "the beautiful garments of righteousness that are white and shining."

"And I must keep it so nice, mamma!"

"Yes, my child. An unkind word will spoil it; sinful thought will stain it. But there is no sin in heaven; and it is the beauty of Heaven, that we shall not want to do or think a wrong thing."

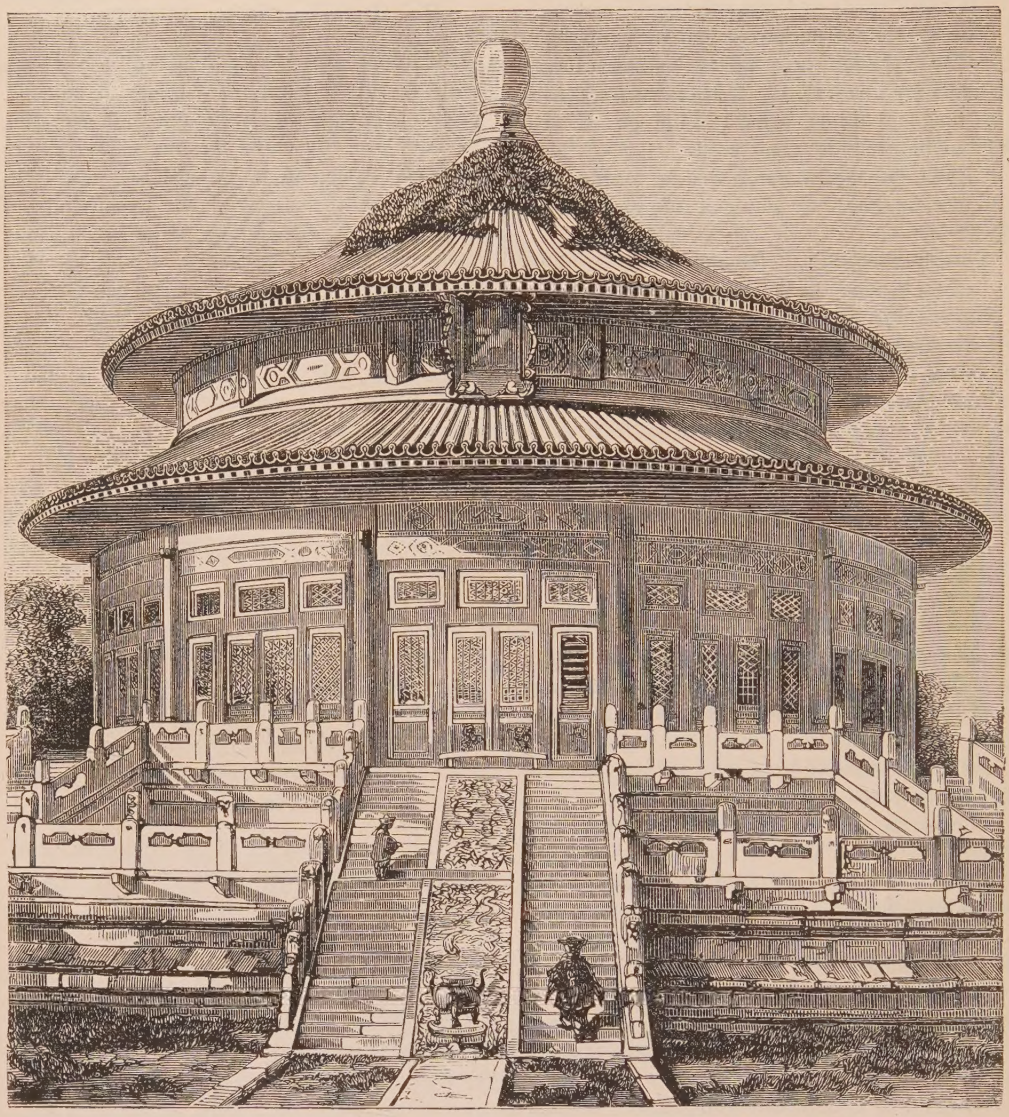
"And we shall not keep wanting things?" said little Jane, thinking, perhaps, of the rocking-horse, and the candy, and the big doll of Emma's which she could not have.

"No, my darling; for we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness."

"Then, mamma, we must not want Fannie back, but think most of going to her."

"Oh, yes! it will be so precious to meet loved ones in Heaven!"

MEN will never know us by our faith, for that is within us; they know us by our works, which are visible to them.



For the Myrtle.

Temple of the Sun.

THIS immense temple was built long ago at Pekin, China. It was dedicated to the sun put under the protection of the god of fire. To this god the people pray when anything is wanted relating to light or fire. If the weather has been long cloudy, so that the farms are suffering, the farmers resort to this temple, and pray for the sunshine to ripen their grain and fruit.

There are no suitable fire engines in Pekin, and, in consequence, when a fire breaks out, a great deal of property is destroyed. All the people pray to this god for protection against fire.

Ought we not to be thankful dear children, that we have been taught a better worship? We do not go to any heathen temple to bow down to gods of wood and stone, but when we are in trouble, or in danger, we have a God who is "over all blessed forever," who will pity and help us.

While you look on this temple, which is so much larger and more magnificent than any church wherein you who read the MYRTLE worship, be not envious of the Chinese children, but rather be thankful that the God who is found in your temples, is so much greater than the idol described.

For the Myrtle.

Finding the Lost.

GRETCHEN LAMBERT is a little German girl whose parents came from the Old to the New in the summer of 1870. They have a family of six children, Gretchen being the oldest daughter, though she has two brothers older than herself.

Mr. Lambert is a strong man, and when he arrived in America he had the good sense to go right on to the West, instead of lounging about the Eastern cities as so many emigrants do.

When he arrived in Iowa he bought him a few acres of land, built on it a small house, and went diligently to work to make a home for his growing family.

It is at this Iowa home that we find little Gretchen on the day of which we write. It was an April day, and yet to have looked at the out-door world you would have thought it mid-winter. The spring had once seemed to be fairly opened, and the little grass blades had begun to grow in all the fields; but this twelvth day of April there came suddenly a snow storm, and all the earth was white again as it had been in January. This storm coming so unexpectedly, and so out of season, did a great deal of damage to the farmers plans.

Mr. Lambert's sheep had been away on the hill-side nipping the new grass when the storm began, but in the midst of all the confusion of the snow, they found their way down to the sheds where they had been sheltered through the winter.

When Mr. Lambert came in to tea at the twilight hour, Gretchen heard him say to her mother,

"One of the ewes has left a lamb on the hill to-night."

"Oh what a pity said Mrs. Lambert. Why don't you send the boys up to look for it?"

"I think it would be of no use to go up there now," Mr, Lambert replied. "The storm is so severe, that it is impossible to see three feet from where you are standing, and the ground is covered so deep with snow now, that I think the poor little creature must be dead by this time."

"Oh father," said Gretchen, who had been listening intently to what had been said. "Do let us children go onto the hill, and see if we can find the lamb, It would be so dreadful if it is not dead, to have it stay out in the snow all night, without any mother to take care of it."

"I think there is no use of going Gretchen, for the lamb is probably dead, and you children would stand a chance of being lost in the storm."

Gretchen said no more to her father, but running away to the shed where her brothers were chopping wood, she said:

"Oh boys, there is a lamb lost on the hill, will you go up and help me find it?"

"Its no use to go," says Harry. And Jean,

looking out at the storm, repeated Harry's words,

"It's no use to go."

Gretchen too, looked out at the storm, but said no word aloud. To herself she was saying,

"Who knows it's no use before we go to see? I can try alone, if nobody will go with me."

So stealing quietly out of the house, she went away onto the hillside, to try her fortune at finding the lamb. The storm began now to abate, and the moon came out,—a big full moon and shone upon the hill. The snow was deep, and the air cold, but Gretchen was strong, and she did not care for the discomfort.

"Our Master came," she said, "to seek and to save that which was lost," and he did not have a good time in the seeking. Why should I expect to fare better than he?"

While she was saying these words, she heard the faint ba! ba! of the lamb down close to a rock where it had sought shelter. Quickly, Gretchen sprangto it, gathered it up in her arms, and ran toward home.

Now she no longer minded the cold. She had forgotten pain in the one thought of joy at the lamb's safety.

Do you wonder at her joy, dear children, or at being told that it vanished not with the cold April day, for Gretchen is the same dear helper still. She forgets herself, and all outward discomforts, and is daily striving, like the Master whom she follows, to "seek and save that which is lost.

The Crow's First Flight.

"Mother, mother," cried a young crow, returning hurriedly from its first flight, "I'm so frightened! I've seen such a sight!"—"What sight, my son?" asked the crow. "Oh! white creatures, screaming and running, straining their necks, and holding their heads ever so high. See, mother, there they go!"—"Geese, my son; merely geese," calmly replied the wise, patient bird. "Through life, child, observei that when you meet anybody who makes a great fuss about himself, and tries to litt his head higher than the rest of the world, you may set him down at once to be a goose."

FOLLY begets folly; and when a man has taken up a false and untenable position, he usually manages to cure an error in judgment by an error of temper.

At the Court House Door.

NO, no, I don't defend him;
You needn't, sir, be afraid;
Of course he's bad, and he's broken the laws,
And they've got to be obeyed;
But I can't help kind of thinking,
I beg your pardon, squire,
If we had had a start like him
We mightn't go much higher!

"So poor?" 'twan't that, 'twan't, sir;
A home may be awful bare,
And keep some kind of quiet
And show of comfort there;
But when its all dirt and disorder—
I never saw such a place—
And you see folks said 'twould always be,
Because it was in the race.

And it had been so, that's true, sir.
His father was very bad,
And the poor boy looked some like him,
And 'twas all against the lad.
Folks wouldn't allow that anything good
Could come of such a stock,;
Kind folks they were, too, in everything else,
But here as set as a rock.
They wouldn't employ him to labor,
They didn't want him around,
There were plenty of nice young fellows,
That needed work, to be found.

And his mother, she was a drunkard,
And that was against him, too;
And so no home, no comfort,
And nothing to get to do.
O well, his folks always expected—
His poor old father, you see—
'Tis curious how their figures
And the way he went agree.
But I've thought a good deal about it,
And I've kind of made it out,
That the way to bring up a fellow,
Isn't just to kick him about.

I don't think much of talking,
And I haven't much to say;
But the better you use a creature
The more you will get for pay.
And we who have had our chances,
And friends to give us a lift,
Won't be too hard on this one
That the town had sent adrift;
For if the noighbors had took him,
And tried to help him along,
You see, it may be, brother,
He hadn't gone quite so wrong.

—*North End Mission.*

A SERVANT girl, who had just been admonished by her mistress to be very careful in "washing up" the best tea-things, was overheard, shortly afterwards, in the back kitchen, indulging in the following soliloquy, "If I was to drop this 'ere basin, and was to catch it, I s'pose I shouldn't catch it; but if I was to drop it, and wasn't to catch it, I reckon I just should catch it."

The Pilgrim's Wants.

The familiar hymn "Just as I Am," by Charlotte Elliott, has endeared her name to all Christians. From her heretofore unpublished poems we take the following exquisite verses: With the suggestion of their excellence for use at a Sunday School concert.

"I want that adorning Divine,
Thou only, my God, canst bestow;
I want in those beautiful garments to shine,
Which distinguish thy household below.
Col, iii. 12. 17.

"I want every moment to feel
That Thy Spirit resides in my heart,
That His power is ready to cleanse and to heal,
And newness of life to impart.
Rom. viii. 11, 16.

"I want, oh! I want to attain
Some likeness, my Saviour, to Thee!
That longed for resemblance once more to regain,
Thy comeliness put upon me.
I. John iii. 2, 3.

"I want to be marked for thine own,
Thy seal on my forehead to wear;
To receive that 'new name' on the mystic white stone,
Which none but Thyself can declare.
Rev. ii. 17.

"I want so in Thee to abide
As to bring forth some fruit to Thy praise!
The branch which Thou prunest, though feeble and dried,
May languish but never decays.
John xv. 2, 5.

"I want Thine own hand to unbind
Each tie to terrestrial things—
Too tenderly cherished, too closely entwined,
Where my heart too tenaciously clings,
I. John ii. 15.

"I want by my aspect serene,
My actions and words to declare—
That my treasure is placed in a country unseen,
That my heart's best affections are there.
Matt. vi. 19, 21.

"I want, as a trav'ler, to haste
Straight onward, nor pause in my way—
Nor forethought, nor anxious contrivance, to waste
On the tent only pitched for a day.
Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

"I want—and this sums up my prayer—
To glorify Thee till I die,
Then calmly to yield up my soul to Thy care,
And breathe out in faith my last sigh:
Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Report of the Sabbath School Union.

We have before us the twenty-third annual report of the Universalist Sunday School Union, from the Secretary Rev. H. I Cushman. It fills twenty-eight closely printed pages. We can only select a few items, but the document should be read entire. The financial record is encouraging. The Trust Fund amounts to $6.534 46, the income of which has been the past year $405,-07. The previous year gave $44 Trust collections; the last year $176 00. Parishes are urged to hold entertainments in aid of the fund. The Uniform Lesson System has been generally adopted by the schools of the Union. The *Helper* series of lessons is highly commended by those who are using them, and whether they are used by all the classes in any given school or as text books in individual classes, we deem these lessons a valuable addition to our Sunday School literature. In order to secure the best results from this system of instruction it is of great importance that there be preparatory meetings at which the teachers my be present as one class. If this system shall secure to our schools such meetings of the teachers, it will have rendered them incalculable service. For your committee are of the opinion that too much stress cannot be laid upon teachers' meetings—statedly held and fully attended,—at which religious themes shall be considered, and the religious culture of the young and the best methods to secure so desirable an end shall be carefully studied.

The importance of the Infant Class is recognized in all the schools. But we urge special care in the organization and conduct of this class, and would suggest that the best talent is none too good to secure its largest success. While the infant class gathers in the younger children and calls their attention thus to the great subjects of religion, an equally important place is held by the Bible Class, that adults may not lose interest in these vital matters from contact with the affairs of life. It is the opinion of your committee that the proper leader of the Bible class is the pastor of the parish. If presided over by the faithful pastor, the Bible class will serve the double purpose of furnishing the school with competent teachers, and of making adults feel that they have a place at the Sunday School session as well as at the church service. Your committee desire renewedly to emphasize the importance of church attendance. Beyond a doubt one of the chief instrumentalities in the religious training of men, is regular attendance upon public worship in the sanctuary. We have learned of one school in our Union whose teachers with two exceptions, are always present at the services of the church, and doubtless there are other schools where the same thing is true. This is a hopeful sign. For the example of the teachers here, as in respect of other matters, is more potent than their words. While adults should be regular in their place in the Sunday School room, the children should be regularly in their place in the church. Every highest consideration of good to the child, to the adult and to the community at large, leads to this conclusion.

Our Sunday Schools.

VERMONT.

— The cause is not at all dead in Ludlow, notwithstanding they have no settled pastor. Since Bro. Powers left them, they have continued their Sunday School, and occasionally held Conference Meetings in each others houses.

ILLINOIS.

Macomb, after their Christmas Sunday School concert found $27.in the treasury for the replenishing of their library.

— At Decatur, our society that has lain dormant for the past two years and a half, has come to life again, and is going to work. The services under Rev. M. W. Tabor, are well attended and Sunday School increasing.

GEN. i. 3.

"And God said, let there be light and there was light."

In the twilight of a Sunday evening Andrew and Jimmy were sitting at a western window watching the fading light.

Andrew says, "Jimmy the sermon was about light, to-day."

"Was it? said Jimmy, "That is nice. As we learned something of heat last Sunday it seems right that we should be taught about light to-day. Can you tell me in an easy way, that I can understand, what the sermon was?"

"Yes I think so. Will you first tell me what light is?"

"Why," said Jimmy hesitatingly, "I can't. If I could tell that, the sermon would be all preached, and there would be no need of my hearing about it."

"Don't say 'I can't,' Jimmy. You can try to tell. I am sure you have some idea of what light is.

"Well yes. I know that light is what we see by."

"That is what we do with light, not what it is."

"I cannot answer the question any better than that. You must remember that I am a little boy, and not as wise as the minister."

"Well let us see if we cannot get at it in a little different way. Where does light come from?"

"From the sun."

"Does all the light come from the sun?"

"No. Some of it comes from the moon."

"And is that all of the light?"

"No, not quite all. We get some from the stars. I know that because it is not nearly so dark in a night when the stars are shining, as it is in a cloudy night."

"And have you told me now all the sources of light?"

"Yes. I think so. What else can there be?"

"Then I understand you that when sun and moon and stars are all hidden by night, or in clouds, we are in total darkness?"

"No, not total darkness, for we have gas and lamps, and candles to burn."

"Where does the light come from which we get from these burners?"

"I never thought of that."

"Well, think now, and tell me."

"It depends upon what kind of light we have."

"Well, take the firelight first, as that is nearest us. Whence comes the light from that grate which is filling this room so cheerfully?"

"It comes from the burning coal."

"And the light of gas, where is that from?"

"They make gas from coal too. And where does the light of lamps come from?"

"From oil which is made from coal, or comes from oil wells."

"There are various other kinds of artificial light, but we have gone far enough in this direction, to get at what we are seeking. Now Jimmy, take notice, this light never comes when the coal or oil lies still, but only when it is burning.

Now this is one of the important thoughts regarding it. It is only when there is motion, or in other words, life, that either heat or light come from any source. But let us come to that thought another way. You found last week when we were talking about heat that it had been put down into those deep coal beds in the heart of the earth, long, long ago, through the rays of the sun, in order that we might one day loose the prisoner, and be kept alive by it. Now tell me, "Where does the light of the moon come from?"

"The sun."

"And the light of the stars, where does it come from?

"The sun, I suppose."

"Yes. From one or another suns all this light is given. But now Jimmy let us go farther and ask where suns get their light."

"They *are* light I suppose."

"No, they are not. For in the account of the creation we are told that in the first day God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' and He did not create the sun and moon until the fourth day.

"I never thought of that before. What is the light then Andrew?"

"Jimmy the light is *life*. It quickens every thing that it reaches. Man and animal, and plant all die when it is withdrawn. Christ was called 'the light of the world because he came that the world might have life, and that it might have it more abundantly.' Then we are to know, and try to understand that light, being life, comes not from sun, moon, or star—but only *through* them to us, out of the heart of the living God."

Letter Puzzle. D.

In me are letters eight,
My one, two, six, and four and five,
My words alone are made alive
Through all extending;
My three, six, seven and eight, you see,
An emblem of eternity,
Never ending.
I was an offering great.

Little Sower.

Answer to Anagram.

FEB. 27.

Oh loving words are not hard to say
If the heart be loving too,
And the kinder the thoughts you give to others
The kinder their thoughts of you.

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